

AFRICA: NGOs call for more direct donor support

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ADDIS ABABA, 8 December (IRIN) - African aid organisations called on western nations on Wednesday to directly fund their efforts to help save and change millions of lives in disasters and development.

The call came from participants representing hundreds of aid groups attending a three-day international symposium on building the capacity and resources of African NGOs in Ethiopia. They called on donors "to channel not less than 25 percent of their contributions to humanitarian action in Africa, directly through African NGOs".

There was strong backing for creation of an African Centre for Humanitarian Action, and for support for sustainable growth of cost-effective and efficient African NGOs.

Former UK development minister Clare Short said the symposium was part of a wider "trend for Africa to take command of its own fate", with "calls for partnership, not mere begging for aid [and a] determination for more African leadership".

Despite deepening poverty in much of the continent, Short added: "I have no doubt considerable progress is possible in Africa."

Yvette Stevens, the assistant humanitarian coordinator for the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), said local NGOs often "lack the know how and resources to become truly effective".

"There is an urgent need for pooling limited resources together to develop capacities and build partnerships," she told the symposium. "National governments in Africa have not fully realised the full potential that NGOs could have in assisting them with their tasks."

Dawit Zawde, founding president of Africa Humanitarian Action, said: "Sustained and predictable funding is crucial to build the capacity of our

organizations to enable us to do far more for those in need throughout Africa."

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